

March 4, 2015

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Dear Senator Gerratona and Representative Dillon,

As the Prevention Coordinator for Lyme/Old Lyme's Community Action for Substance Free Youth Coalition (CASFY), I am concerned about the drastic cuts to the Regional Action Councils and specifically to ours: Southeastern Regional Action Council (SERAC) that serves the twenty towns in our southeast region of Connecticut. The prevention funding cuts outlined in Governor Malloy's proposed budget would reduce the overall budget of the RAC's by \$775,000. This would significantly impact the resources they provide to our community.

For every dollar spent on prevention, our state as a whole saves \$10. So by saving less than a million dollars, you would be incurring nearly \$7,000,000 in economic costs. For every person needing treatment for substance abuse or addiction, please think of the costs. Please think about the costs to families, law enforcement, treatment and health care, department of justice, prisons, etc. Many people afflicted by drug abuse and addiction impact many state resources.

Since 2005, SERAC has assisted our L/OL Coalition in the following ways. First they were invaluable in supporting our prevention work before we received a grant to prevent youth substance use. They have provided ongoing technical assistance as well as training. For example, I recently attended their 3 hour workshop on "Current Drug Trends." SERAC coordinates advocacy. I am participating in a SERAC- led task force to greatly expand the accessibility of naloxone (to prevent deaths from opioid overdoses). We also depend on SERAC for

- Youth Programs (Youth Forum, ALLI, Educational Series, STEP)
- Parent education (Parent Training, forums)
- Community Wide Campaigns (billboards, posters)
- Rx Disposal Box/Take backs
- Teacher Training
- Train the trainer programs
- Suicide Prevention (QPR, MHFA)

I believe it would be in the best interest of all CT residents to fully restore the funding for Regional Action Councils. Please remember that we save an incredible amount of money by preventing problem behaviors.

Sincerely,  
*Karen Fischer*  
Karen K. Fischer

